

The Greatness of Hell-Torments.

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A

SERMON

Preach'd before

KING WILLIAM,

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Hampton-Court, Novemb. 1700.

MATTH. 25. 41.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

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MATTHEW 25. 41.

Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.

HAVING, in my former Discourses upon these words, finish'd what I propounded first to treat of from them, *viz.* the *Certainty of Hell-Torments*, from Principles of Nature and Reason; I shall now proceed, according to the method which I set my self, to consider the Greatness of them, and, in so doing,

First, To shew that they will certainly be inconceivably great; and

Secondly, To enquire, as far as is possible, wherein the greatness of them will consist.

And, forasmuch as, in my former Discourses, I have so far gratify'd some Men, as, chiefly for their sakes, to argue only from Principles of Nature and Reason, for the proof of that, which is the main point in dispute between us, *viz.* the *Certainty of Hell-Torments* (tho' still with this caution, that the fullest and clearest proof of this matter must be had from the Holy Scriptures) I shall now be less solicitous about gratifying them as to what follows, and shall freely argue from Revelation, as well as Nature and Reason, and tho' I shall not neglect or pass over proofs from these, yet I shall no longer confine my self wholly to them.

First then, I am to shew that the *Torments of Hell* will certainly be inconceivably great. And this is so plain a truth, that the very *Heathens* themselves, by the meer light of Nature, seem to have been perfectly well assur'd of it. For not only their *Poets*, (whose heated fancies and imaginations may perhaps be suppos'd to have carry'd them a great deal to far, upon this subject (tho' even these in my Opinion, are not wholly to be slighted in this case, because *Poets*, especially good



good ones, always write with some regard to the Sentiments of the Age, in which they live) but also their best and gravest Philosophers, do both expressly assert the extremity and intolerableness of *Hell-Torments*, and likewise give us such terrifying and amazing descriptions of them, as may abundantly convince us, that they did really believe them to be infinitely great, infinitely beyond all that they were able to express. A small taste of which you may be pleas'd to take in *Plato* only, (a) who, under the person of one who is suppos'd to have seen *Hell*, and afterwards to have return'd to this World again, tells us what dreadful spectacles he there saw : how he beheld Men tortur'd, with numberless Tortures of all sorts ; some burning in Rivers of fire, others shivering and freezing in streams of excessive coldness, some toss'd about and torn by wild Beasts, others incessantly burnt with the lamps of the Furies, and more particularly some (and certainly we can hardly think of any thing more terrible to sense) bound hand and foot, then flay'd, and thrown upon thorns and prickles, to be tortur'd.

And indeed it is no great wonder that they should judge so right in this matter : because the reason of the thing it self must needs make it very evident, to every one that impartially considers it. For, whether we reflect upon the heinous and odious nature of sin, and its direct opposition to our own Reason and the Divine nature and will : or upon the infinity Majesty of that God, who is affronted by our sins : or lastly, upon those infinite obligations to God, which Men break though to their sins ; we must necessarily acknowledge the circumstances on all hands to be so very inexcusable, aggravating and provoking, that the Divine Vengeance has all the reason, that can possibly be imagin'd, to inflict the most severe and dreadful punishments upon Sinners.

And accordingly we find by experience it has always done. The rebellious Angels immediately felt God's vengeful arm, upon their Rebellion, and were soon tumbled down headlong, from their bright seats of everlastings bliss and glory,

(a) *Platon. Phædo, Gorgias, Axiochus, Leg. l. 10.*

into the dark Regions of eternal horror, wo and misery; and the very first sin of Man was punish'd, with the loss of Immortality, the Divine Presence, and all the conveniencies and delights of *Paradise*: and not only so, but with the curse of continual labour, pain, and sorrow all the while that he should live, and in the end, with death it self. Afterwards, an universal *Deluge* swept away the whole World, excepting only eight persons, for their sins; and, for the same cause, the Lord rain'd down fire and brimstone upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, and destroy'd them. And, to name but one more instance, the very beloved People of God the *Jews*, for their sin in rejecting and crucifying the Lord of life, were persecuted with such a long and dreadful train of Woes and Miseries, at the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as it would make your very hearts bleed only to hear repeated. So careful has God been in all Ages, to manifest his high dislike of, and indignation against, Sin, and the severity of those Judgments, with which it shall be punish'd. And then, as *St. Peter* argues, *if God spared not the Angels that sinn'd* (a Race of much higher and nobler Beings than we are) *but cast them down to Hell, and deliver'd them into chains of darkness, to be reserv'd unto Judgment*; and brought a Sentence of misery and death upon all Mankind, for the sins of their first Parents; *and spar'd not the old World, bringing in the flood upon the World of the ungodly; and turning the Cities of Sodom and Gomorrab into ashes, condemn'd them with an overthrow*; 2 Pet. 2. 4, 5, 6, 9. and pour'd out the vials of his wrath upon his own People the *Jews*, in the most terrible and astonishing manner imaginable; then let us be assur'd, that he knoweth how *To reserve the unjust, unto the day of Judgment to be punish'd*.

Farther, We have most of us seen or heard of in others, and I fear many of us felt within our selves, some Specimens, as it were, of *Hell-Torments*, even in this World: when God has been pleas'd to let loose the Consciences of Sinners upon them, and to lay open the prospect of their future State before their Eyes. But, Lord! who can be able to express the terrors, that such Men are then in? Who, that has seen them, can reflect upon them, without the utmost horror? Who, that

has felt them, can thing any thing worthy the name of pain, after them? Oh the uneasiness, the restlessness, the agonies, the racks, the tortures of a wounded Spirit! Oh the doleful symptoms, the dire effects, the fullness, the tremblings, the blood sweats of Despair. Blessed God! Who can conceive the greatness of those Torments, which have such terrible effects? Who shall be able to endure those Torments, which few, very few, have courage enough so much as to think on? Oh! how would it have affected the most obstinate and obdurate heart among us, to have seen the unhappy Spira, weltering upon his bed, as if it had been upon a bed of flames: seeking rest, but finding none: nay, not so much as hoping for it, while he sought it; and to have beheld the fierceness of those Torments, which in spite of Attempts to comfort and relieve him, meerly his own guilty mind, and the fears of Hell only, continually lash'd and scourg'd him with.

And yet alas! these foretastes of *Hell*, and all other even the severest Judgments of God against Sinners in this World, are but very faint and feeble representations, but mere dawns and glimpses, of that wrath which shall be reveal'd in the next. *That, That* is the place which God has reserv'd for the more *signal and consummate* punishment of Sinners; There all Circumstances shall combine together, for the aggravation of their miseries: and all those reasons shall their cease, which have, in great measure, ty'd up the hands of Divine vengeance in this World. There all the doubts of the wicked will be too plainly resolv'd: their infidelity turn'd into a faith, which will make them tremble: and those small hopes, which they once had, into pure and unmix'd despair. There will be no sleep, no friends, no diversion, to gain them now and then a short respite from their miseries, as in this life. Lastly, There the Righteous and the Unrighteous shall be perfectly separated, and there shall no longer be any danger of destroying the innocent with the wicked: there the season for Sinners repentance will be at an end, and consequently all long-suffering and patience, upon that account, at an end too: and, for the same reason, there the prayers of good Men, on behalf of the wicked, shall cease, and God shall be no longer

importun'd and with-held by them, from giving his avenging arm its full scope. And what then is to be expected, but that God's *whole displeasure shall arise*: that he shall whet his sword, and give it a keener Edge, and make it fall yet seven times heavier upon his Enemies, than it had e're before been wont to do? What indeed is to be then expected, but that a new, and infinitely more terrible Scene of dread and horror shall appear, an exquisite and perfect State of suffering begin?

And then it is no wonder that we find the Holy Spirit, every where in Scripture, speaking in such dreadful terms of *Hell-Torments*, and representing them always by those things, which are most terrible to sense. As, that they shall cause weeping and wailling and *gnashing of teeth*: *tribulation and anguish trembling* and *wo*, Matt. 8. 12. 13. 42. Rom. 2. 9. and all the dismal Symptoms of the most intense and fiercest Torments: that no Man can *dwell* with them: *Isa.* 33. 14. that we should make but a monstrous silly Bargain, tho', even for the gain of *the whole World*, Matt. 16. 26. we should sell our Souls to them: that they were *prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels*, Matt. 25. 41. those most impudent and outrageous Offenders, and consequently those most unhappy objects of God's hottest wrath; that they are set forth to us under the name of *fire, a devouring fire, fire that never shall be quenck'd, fire everlasting*: by *fire and brimstone*, by *a lake of fire and brimstone*, by *a worm that dyeth not*, &c. *Mar.* 9. 43. *Rev.* 14. 10. 19. 20. *Mar.* 9. 44. 46. 48. From all which it is plain, as also from the exact proportion that will certainly be, between the rewards and punishments of another Life, that we may fairly apply those Words, which were spoken by St. Paul, or the *Joys of Heaven*, to the *Torments of Hell*: that *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man*, 1 Cor. 2. 9. those dreadful things, which God hath prepar'd for them that hate him. But this will appear still more clearly, from enquiring.

Secondly, *As far as we are able, wherein the greatness of Hell Torments will consist*. I say, *as far as we are able*: because we are as yet very much in the dark, as to the particulars of our future State. However, as far as the Scriptures and

and plain Reason will bear me out in this matter, I am sure I may safely venture : and I hope I shall take sufficient care to venture no farther. I know very well that this is a Subject, upon which good Men have been very apt to give a great deal too much scope to their fancies : as St. *Basil* for instance, who fancy'd that, at the *general Conflagration* of the World, [*Basil. in P/. 28.*] there will be a Separation of the purer and more refin'd and noble parts of all the Elements, from the grosser and more ignoble : that the former shall all ascend to and continue about Heaven, to minister to the glory and felicity of the Saints ; but the latter be cast down to Hell, for the punishment of the damn'd ; that so, as every Creature should be matter of joy and comfort to the Blessed, so on the contrary, every Creature should help to aggravate the Torments of the damn'd ; and they, who had forsaken God who is but one, to follow the Creatures, who are many, might have a manifold Punishment, manifold Tormentors. And these fancies, how groundless soever, yet carrying an appearance of religious zeal along with them, are apt to take too much, and to make too deep an impression on the belief of a great many honest-minded Christians. And, tho' there be no great harm in them to Men, who consider them only as fancies and private opinions, yet, seeing that many Christians are injudicious, and often lay too great stress upon such fancies, it is best certainly not to indulge our selves in them, in discourses upon this Subject ; but to keep close to Reason and Scripture, as I shall endeavour to do, in what follows. Now our Reason and Scripture make the greatness of Hell-torments to consist in these particulars,

First, In the Wicked's being banish'd from the enjoyment of God, and all that *fulness of Joy*, and *those Rivers of Pleasure*, which are *in his presence*, and *at his right hand*, for evermore : and in all the miseries naturally consequent upon such their banishment.

Secondly, In the lashes of their own guilty Minds, and of all those vexatious Lusts and Passions, which they shall carry with them into another World, and which will be mightily heighten'd and inflam'd there,

Thirdly, In the loathsomeness and uncomfortableness of the place of Hell, and the troublesome Conversation of the Devil and wicked Spirits, which they shall be there confin'd to.

Fourthly, In the pains occasion'd by the Fire of Hell, or whatever is meant under that name. And

Lastly, In the uninterrupted continuance, and eternal duration, of every one of these.

First, In the Wicked's being banish'd from the enjoyment of God, and all that *fulness of Joy*, and *those Rivers of Pleasure*, which are in his presence, and at his right hand, for evermore : and in all the miseries naturally consequent upon such their banishment. For so runs the former part of that dreadful Sentence, which shall be pronounc'd against the wicked, at the day of Judgment, *Depart from me, ye cursed*. Not that the wicked shall so depart from God, as never to see or remember him any more, and to loose all knowledge of Him and Heaven for ever : No, this, as sad a punishment as it is, would be but a very light one, in comparison of that, which they shall then be doom'd to. They shall see God, or, which is the same thing, have a most quick and lively notion of him, but without hopes of ever being reconcil'd to him ; They shall see Heaven, or at least have always a fresh remembrance of that glorious sight which they had of it, at the general Judgment : but still, as the Rich Man in the Gospel did Paradise, with an impassable gulph betwixt it and them.

But oh my Soul ! How canst thou ever sufficiently conceive the dreadfulnes of such a departure from God, as this is ? How canst thou, even in any tolerable measure, know what thou shalt loose, in loosing that Infinity Abiss of Happiness ? How canst thou bear the Thoughts of existing, so much as one moment, when thou shalt be frown'd upon by him, in whose favour alone, is life, that is, every thing which makes Life desirable ? Oh ! How wilt thou be able to endure thyself : when thy Father, thy most tender and compassionate Father : thy Saviour, thy most loving and relenting Saviour : the Holy Angels and just Men made perfect, those best natur'd of Created beings : when the *God of all comfort*, and *giver of every good gift* : when he, who once lov'd thee

so well, as to *lay down his life for thee*: when they, who have made in their constant business to minister to thee, and have rejoyc'd without measure, when they have seen the least hopes of thy becoming happy; in one word, when all those beings who are good, and continually delight in doing good, and from whom alone all good must come, shall not endure thee, shall detest and abhor thee, shall spurn thee from their presence, shall *laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh*? Good God! how will it vex and fret our Souls, to reflect upon these bright and glorious Mansions of happiness, from which we shall be then banish'd? How will the Contemplation even of Heaven it self torment us, when it shall serve only to create in us strong and eager desires and longings after it, which must never be satisfy'd, and to remind us of a loss, which is as Infinite as God himself? But, above all, how will it gall and wound our Souls, how will it make us all rage and fury against our selves, to consider, that we have lost all this thro' our own fault: and that, when we had it all within our reach and in our power, we were contented (foolish Creatures that we were !) for meer gawds and trifles, meer shadows and appearances of happiness, to part with it? Certainly, were there no other Punishment for the wicked in Hell, than this, they would have great reason to say of it, as *Cain* did of his, *it is greater than we can bear*. But

Secondly, There will be likewise the lashes of their own guilty Minds, and of all those vexatious Lusts and Passions, which they shall carry with them into another World, and which will be mightily heighen'd and inflam'd there. By the worm of the wicked, which shall never dye. so often mention'd in Scripture as what is to be part of their Punishment in Hell, we are doubtless to understand the remorse of their own guilty Minds or Consciences, which shall, as it were, gnaw and prey upon them, and give them much greater pain and torment, than a worm preying upon their living flesh would do. Their Consciences, I say, which will there be continually and most sensibly reproaching them, not only with the loss of Heaven (tho' this will be reproach enough) but with all that baseness, ingratitude, unreasonableness, folly and sinfulness towards

toward God, which they shall have been guilty of, in their past Lives : and with all that shame, anguish, horror, inconceivable and endless Misery, which they shall thereby have brought upon their own Heads. And, as we are sure, from the nature of the thing it self, that, when the wicked shall no longer be cloth'd with such bodies of flesh, as they now are, which mightily obstruct and press down the Soul in her operations, but shall put on spiritual bodies, bodies in which their Souls may freely and uncontrollably exert their utmost powers, their apprehensions and resentments of things must necessarily become vastly more quick and vigorous, and consequently their sense of their own folly, guilt and misery, and their remorse, anguish and trouble for them, exceeding more keen and poignant, than they had ever been in this World. So have we all the reason that can be to believe, that the Divine Vengeance will both add new stings to these their own inbred Tormentors and (as I have before proved to you, it sometimes does with the wounded spirits of Sinners, even in this World) whet and sharpen, in a super-natural manner, the points of their old ones. So that, whereas in this World their Consciences did only chastise them with whips, they shall there chastise them with Scorpions.

Besides this, some Divines have been of opinion that wicked Men shall carry their appetites and lustings after sensual pleasures, into Hell along wit them : and there, to their unspeakable Torment, continually burn with the most raging and vehement desires and longings after these things, which yet at the same time they shall be infallibly assur'd, it shall never in the least be in their power to enjoy. But, this seeming not very agreeable to the notion of those spiritual Bodies which the wicked shall be clothed with in a future State, I shall not insist upon it ; but only suppose, what I think very probable, that the wicked shall retain in *Hell* a remembrance *Luke 16. 25.* of those pleasures which they once enjoyed, in this World, in their Bodies of flesh, and that this remembrance shall be extremely grateful and pleasing to them, and put them upon wishing most earnestly that they were again to be clothed with such Bodies, again to act over the same pleasures :

tures : which having long accusom'd themselves to, the full bent and inclination of their Souls has been long wholly set towards them, and has made them utterly incapable of relishing or delighting in any other. And, if there shall be any such eager longings and hankerings after bodies of flesh, and the pleasures belonging to them : these join'd with an utter despair of ever obtaining what they so much long for, must needs be an unsupportable Torment to the damn'd.

But, be this as it will, it is certain both from Reason and Scripture, that the wicked shall be subject to all those peevish and uneasy Passions in Hell, which are purely spiritual : as *Pride, Envy, Malice, Anger, Hatred, Fear, Self-Revenge*, &c. and moreover shall have all these in a much higher degree there, much more troublesome and vexatious to them, than they where in this World. All these we find ascrib'd to the Devil and his Angels, spiritual Beings, in Scripture : and indeed it is inconceivable to Reason, how wicked Souls can exist without them ; and these being pure spiritual Passions, or Passions of the mind consider'd abstractedly from the body, must needs grow and increase, as we become more and more spiritualiz'd. Besides, that the objects of these vexatious passions will be infinitely enlarg'd to the Damn'd in Hell, and that they will there meet with the most provoking occasions of raising and inflaming their passions to the utmost, and yet at the same time with the most tormenting balks and disappointments to them, that can possibly be imagin'd. Did the envious Man grow big and swell with Envy here, at the sight of the earthly prosperity of his Brethren ? He will even burst with it there, at the Contemplation of the happiness of the Saints in Heaven. Did the Malicious Man, hate and malign those, who never did him much hurt here ? Oh how will he rage and flame out with hatred and ill-will against all those malicious Beings, his Companions in Hell, who shall continually be doing him all the mischief that they are able there ? Did not the proud Man know how to brook any, even the smallest, disappointments here ? Alas ! he shall meet with nothing else but disappointments, and those too, of the highest kind, there ; there, I say, where he shall be sure of having every such thing as he would not, and no one such thing as he would. Was the angry Man apt to be soon put into a passion here, by little Crosses and Vexations ? He will there be continually heated, fired, nay, even made and kept red-hot, by a constant series of great ones. To say all at once, the fears of the wicked shall be there heighten'd into despair, their displeasure against themselves into the utmost indignation ; and the most exasperated Rage, fretfulness and bitterness of Soul, the most unmix'd Sorrow, irksomeness and self Abhorrency, the keenest Anger and Revenge, shall be the *portion of their cup*. So that indeed wicked Men seem to carry compleat Misery into Hell along with them, while they carry such appetites as, tho' never so eager and craving, cannot in the least there be satisfied : such passions as, tho' never so vexatious and intorable, cannot in the least be pacify'd and allay'd there. And yet this Misery will still be enhanc'd.

Thirdly, By the loathsomeness and uncomfortableness of the place of Hell,

Hell, and the troublesome conversation of the Devil and wicked spirits, which the damn'd shall be there confin'd to. Whereever the place of Hell shall be, which as St. Gregory saith, *I dare not rashly determine*, and as St. Augustin, *I believe no Man knows but him, to whom the Divine Spirit has particularly reveal'd it*; whereever it shall be (whither in the Center of the Earth, as some have thought: or upon this very Earth, upon which we now live, and which will have been the scene of all the Villanies of the wicked, as others: or lastly in a space beyond and without this world (as some have fancy'd from that Text of Job 18. 18. *That the wicked shall be chas'd out of the World*) there can be no doubt but it will be very dismal; agreeable to the company and business which it is design'd for. And the Scriptures have said enough of it, styling it *darkness, utter darkness, the blackness of darkness*, (a thing most ungrateful to Human Nature) to give us a most loathsome and abominable notion of it. Tho' probably, this darkness shall not be wholly without a mixture of light: but then it will be a light, even worse than darkness it self, a light which will only help us to see such sad and rueful Spectacles, as will mightily add to our misery, and which we shall heartily wish might be *hid from our eyes for ever*.

Then, as to the company of Hell, we know that this is wholly made up of Devils and wicked Men: and these being all most malicious and ill-natur'd Beings. and besides such, as, we shall than be sensible, have been highly instrumental in drawing us into this *place of Torment*, and moreover, some of them such, as are to be our *very Tormentors*: the bare sight of them must needs be extremely odious and uneasy to the wicked. And nothing can be expected from such Company, but continual jangling, hatred, anger, snarling and biting at one another, nothing but the most terrible Fears and jealousies of, the most malicious and spiteful bickerings against, each other. And good God! if it be thought so very irksome a thing here, to be oblig'd to spend only a few hours in Company that is disagreeable: how shall we ever be able to bear the thoughts of taking up our dwelling among that Hellish Crew, who study nothing else, day and night, than how they may be best able to provoke and exasperate each other, to the highest degree possible.

Besides the Damn'd must needs be very gaily and doleful Spectacles to each other: and their perpetual *weeping, wailing, sighing, howling* and loud *out-cries*, occasion'd by their Torments, must needs be very dreadful and affecting. So far will it be, in this case, from being any comfort to us to have Companions in our Misery, that this very thing will be a great addition to our Torments. Oh how sadly shall we read our own Miseries, in the melancholy countenances of every one of our Companions? How terrible and killing must the sound of those groans and complaints needs be, which are, as it were, but the faint ecchos of our own? What an hideous, what an heart-breaking consort of woes, must that be, which comes from an innumerable company of poor unhappy Wretches, labouring under the sharp pangs of a Wounded Conscience, and

a Mind gall'd and fretted by all the most vexatious Passions, and yet farther, burning and scorching in the flames of Hell fire. Which is the

Fourth thing, which I propos'd to speak to, And here I must freely confess that I cannot see any manner of reason, why we should suppose that the fire of Hell will not be a real and material, but only a metaphorical and figurative Fire. On the contrary I think, that the Scriptures constantly expressing it as real, and not so much as in one place, that I know of, departing from this way of expressing it, or favouring any other way of understanding it, is a very good reason why we should believe it so to be. Certainly nothing, if it were purposely study'd and design'd could serve more effectually to satisfy our Minds in this point, than the Parable of the rich Man in the Gospel; who is there represented as burning in a material Fire, in Hell, and begging for water to cool his Tongue, and expression properly belonging only to a material Fire.

If it be said that the Torments of Hell are sometimes express'd in Scripture, by other things than that of fire: and that therefore fire is to be understood not properly but figuratively; I answer, that there are other Torments of Hell, besides those of fire, and that these are they which are express'd by those other things; as that of a guilty Conscience in particular, which is represented, in the Text from which these Men fetch this Argument, by a *worm that dyeth not*: but which is there plainly represented as a thing different from the fire of Hell: *Where the worm dyeth not, and the fire is not quenched.*

And if it be farther urg'd that the fire of Hell being said in Scripture to be prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels, spiritual Beings, and allotted to wicked Men, not till after the Resurrection when they shall have receiv'd their spiritual Bodies, we cannot possibly take it to be material Fire: because it is utterly inconceivable to Reason how such Fire can any way affect such Beings. I shall think it enough to answer, that our notions of the nature of Angels, and of our own spiritual Bodies, as also of that Fire which shall be in Hell, supposing it to be a material Fire, are but very dark and imperfect, and consequently not to be argu'd from with any great certainty; and moreover, that it does not seem at all more wonderful that spirits should be affected by such Fire, than that they should be united to bodies of flesh, and affected and influenced by them, as we are sure our Souls now are, tho' we know not how. *Why, saith St. Austin, may we not say that spirits may be tormented by corporeal Fire, when it is plain that the Souls of Men are now included in bodily Members, after a wonderful indeed, but yet real manner?* [*De Civit. Dei* l. 21. c. 10.]

However, be this as it will, it is agreed on all hands, that the Torments, design'd under the name of fire, will be very great and insupportable, and not less to be sure than those of material Fire would be, but rather vastly greater. It being not usual in Scripture, when speaking of the things of another Life, to represent them by things greater than themselves, put frequently, I believe we may say always, by lesser.

I shall but just mention one thing more under this head; and that is,
that

that both the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, did suppose another Torment for the wicked, directly contrary to this of burning, *viz.* *extreme cold*; and made the Element of water as well as that of fire, as the Deluge as well as the *fire and brimstone* did of old, contribute to their punishment. And *St. Jerom*, who without doubt had this notion from the *Jews*, explains those words of *Job* 24. 19. (as they are render'd by the *vulgar Latin*) *He shall pass from waters of snow to excessive heat*, to this purpose, *Job*, saith he, seems to me to speak here of two Hells, or places of torment, *Fire and Cold*: perhaps in Hell the torments of the Damn'd will be of that nature, that they will sometimes feel excessive heat, and at other times as excessive cold. Nay, and some learned Men strive to draw what our Saviour saith, of the gnashing of the teeth of the wicked in Hell, to countenance this notion: as if that were nothing else but a knocking of their teeth together, occasion'd by extreme shivering cold. And it must be acknowledg'd that the *βρῦσις τῶν ὀδόντων*, which we translate *gnashing of teeth*, is sometimes us'd in prophane Authors, to signify that knocking of the teeth together, which is occasion'd by the shiverings of an Ague. And then as to the *Heathens*, (a) it is well known that of their two Rivers, into which the Damn'd were to be thrown, the one *Periphelethron* was extreme hot, and the other *Cocytus* or *Archeron* extreme cold. And the *Mahometans* likewise have pick'd up this notion, and inserted it into their *Alcoran*. But there being little or no ground for this in Scripture, I shall be contented with just mentioning it, and pass on to consider the last aggravating circumstances of the Torments of the Damn'd, *viz.*

Fifthly, The uninterrupted continuance, and eternal duration of them. For so the Scripture tells us, that *the smoke of the torment of the wicked ascendeth up for ever and ever*, and that *they have no rest day nor night*; and again that *they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*. *Revel.* 14. 11. 20. 10. And what a dreadful addition will this be to the Torments of the Damn'd, that they shall be without intermission, and without end? Will not the very thoughts of this give a keener edge to all their Sufferings, and be a kind of new Hell to them. But I shall say no more of this here, because I design to treat particularly of the Eternity of Hell-Torments, in my following Discourses, and under that shall have occasion to say something of the uninterrupted continuance of them.

It remains only that I draw some few inferences from what has been said and so conclude. And,

First, It seems very obvious to observe that the Greatness of Hell-Torments is a full answer to that difficulty about the dispensations of Providence, as to the prosperity of wicked Men in this World: since it is plain from hence, that, however Providence may suffer them to flourish here for a while, yet it will be sure to be even with them, at the long run, even to the uttermost farthing. So that wicked Man can have no reasonable encouragement to go on in their Sins, nor good Men to envy the

(a) *Plato. Phædo. Max. Tyr. dissertat.* 29.

Worldly prosperity of the wicked, *because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed.* Eccles. 8. 11, 12, 13. For, as the Wise-Man speaks, *sho^t a Sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolong'd, yet sure I know that it shall not be well with the wicked.* God indeed is rich in goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering toward the wicked, being desirous by these to lead them to Repentance. But, if they despise these, and still continue hard and impenitent in their hearts, they then only *treasure up to themselves wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will certainly, sooner or later, render to every man according to his deeds, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil.* Rom. 2. 4, 5, 6, 8, 9.

Secondly, The Greatness of Hell-Torments is a plain proof, both of the Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Goodness of God; his wisdom, in guarding and securing his own Laws, Honour and Authority, with the threatnings of such dreadful Punishments, as are sufficient to keep his Creatures in awe of him, and prevent their Rebellion against him; his goodness, in making Damnation so very terrible a thing, that if Men would but well consider and seriously attend to it, it would be, morally speaking, impossible for any one Man ever to be damn'd. God indeed has made his Terrors strong and powerful enough to persuade men, and to deter them from complying with the most alluring temptations to do Evil. So that if, after all, Men will be damn'd. they must e'en take their Damnation to themselves, and acknowledge that God was *unwilling that any should perish*, since he has done *abundantly enough* to scare Men from coming so much as near the borders of Hell: all indeed that he could do, without laying such a force and necessity upon Men, as is by no means agreeable to their nature, as free Agents.

Thirdly, Since it has been evidently made out, that the Torments of Hell will certainly be inconceivably Great, what signifieth it to be mighty nice and curious in enquiring into the nature, and particular kinds of them. That, in the general they will be inconceivably great, this is surely motive enough to us, to use our utmost endeavours for the avoiding of them: and this is the great use of our knowledge of them. At least, if this be not sufficient, it is to be fear'd that a more particular knowledge, if it could be had, would not much mend the matter.

Fourthly, From what has been said concerning the Nature of Hell-torments, we should learn to be extremely careful, not to cherish in our selves, and make as it were habitual and con-natural to us, any troublesome Lusts and Passions in this World. For, besides that God will inflict Punishments upon us hereafter for so doing, these Lusts and Passions will go themselves into another World, along with us, and there become our Tormentors; nay, and moreover get new and infinitely sharper Stings there, than they had here. They are indeed an Hell growing up within us: and sure seeds of wo and misery, which shall spring up and break forth in a plentiful Crop, in the Devils Kingdom.

Lastly,

Lastly, From the consideration of the Greatness of Hell-Torments, appears the vast disproportion that there is, between the pleasures of Sin, and the pains or punishments of it. The one faint and languid, the other quick and lively to the highest degree: the one uncertain, rare and fugitive, the other constant, fix'd and permanent: the one frequently broken and interrupted, the other without relaxation or intermission: the one mightily mix'd and allay'd, the other pure and unmingled: the one always below our conception and expectation of it, the other above all conception or apprehension: the one limited within narrow bounds, the other next to infinite: the one but for a season, the other for all Eternity. Were we to weigh only the Temporal Pains and Inconveniencies of Sin, against the pleasures of it: I doubt not but we should find these full heavy enough to turn the balance against them; but, when to these we add that black after reckoning which awaits Sinners in another World, that sad Eternity of woe which is there laid up for them, Good God! How infinitely do they outweigh them?

And how then, in the name of reason, can it possibly come to pass that we should find the pleasures of Sin so much courted and esteem'd, and the punishments of it so much slighted and dis-regarded? How can it possibly be, that Beings, endow'd with sound understanding and discretion, should be content to sell themselves to unspeakable and everlasting Misery, only for the trifling and perishing Enjoyments of this Life? It cannot be from any other cause, than their want of making a right use of that Judgment which God has given them: It could never be, would they, but ever now and then seriously consider with themselves, what the end of those men shall be, that obey not the Gospel of Christ, 2. Thess. 1. 8. and sincerely ask themselves, how they shall be able to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, when it shall be pour'd out, without mixture, into the cup of his indignation. Rev. 14. 10.

Oh let us then frequently, with an eye of faith, take a view of the Torments of Hell: and then we shall be most ready to do or suffer any thing, for the avoiding of them: to pluck out a right eye, to cut off a right hand, that is, to part with any thing, however dear and precious to us, rather than our whole body should be cast into Hell. Matt. 5. 29, 30. And how inviting soever the pleasures of Sin, or the Company of sinners may outwardly appear to be: yet let us, at our utmost peril, beware of them. For, as the Son of Sirach truly observes, *The Congregation of the wicked is like Tow wrapped together, and the end of them is a flame of fire to destroy them.* Ecclus. 21. 9. 10. And, tho' the way of sinners be made plain with Stones, yet at the end thereof is the pit of Hell.

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